

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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High Nitrate in Private Drinking Wells

The Wood and Juneau County Health and Land and Water Resource Departments are working to ensure that all citizens have a source of safe, clean drinking water.

[Mauston, WI] – High nitrate levels have been found in private drinking water wells of some Juneau and Wood County residents near Armenia Township (Juneau County). We urge residents to take the following actions if their well water has a high nitrate level:

- Infants less than 6 months, pregnant women, and women who may become pregnant should immediately stop using the high nitrate water for drinking or preparing foods (infant formula, soup, rice).
- Everyone should avoid long-term consumption of water with high nitrate levels
- It is ok to use the water for activities like showering and household chores.

High nitrate levels are a health risk particularly for children less than 6 months old. Women who are pregnant or may become pregnant should also pay attention to nitrate levels. To learn more about what you can do to protect yourself and your family from high levels of nitrate, see the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' (DHS') [[HYPERLINK "https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/p-02128.htm" \]](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/p-02128.htm)

In May 2018, the Juneau and Wood County Health and Land and Water Departments partnered with the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point to conduct a survey of nitrate levels in private wells to address drinking water concerns expressed by residents in the Armenia township area.

“So far, we have found that 41% of the total wells tested had nitrate levels above the groundwater standard,” said Juneau County Health Officer Barb Theis. “It is important for residents with high levels of nitrate to take immediate action by using bottled water to assure a safe source of water for drinking and cooking.” The groundwater standard for nitrate is 10 milligrams of nitrate per liter of water (mg/L) and is the amount of nitrate that can be in the

groundwater and be safe for drinking. The percent of wells observed with high nitrate levels, through this survey, is greater than the estimated statewide average of 9% of wells.

Both Wood and Juneau Health Departments and county conservationists are working to help residents understand their water-quality issues, and in identifying long-term solutions other than continued use of bottle water. An educational session is part of the groundwater testing program and will occur once all results are analyzed and mapped.

More information, please contact:

Juneau County Health Department: 608-847-9373

Juneau County Land and Water Resources: 608 847-7221 extn. 114

Wood County Health Department: (715) 421-8911

Wood County Land and Water Conservation : 715 421-8475

DHS' Nitrate Factsheet: dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/p-02128.htm

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Groundwater Study:
datcp.wi.gov/Documents/GroundwaterReport2017.pdf

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